

CONCLUSION

The foregoing study reveals certain interesting pre-historic features of the Mayiladuthurai region through archaeological excavations and implements. The Pre-Historic age and human of the region is traced from the Neolithic age. The existence of an earlier Neolithic settlement is attested in this region Mayiladuthurai and once it was evolved in to a higher stage of social organization. The availability of Neolithic implements at Sembiyankandiyur, Kambarmedu and so on attests the fact that Mayiladuthurai region has been served as human settlement ever since the dawn of civilization. The recent excavation sites like Ambal clearly reveal the fact that several places in Mayiladuthurai region may be the settlements of Pre- Historic age. Certain interesting allusions from Sangam Literature pertaining to the Mayiladuthurai region clearly reveals that in the subsequent ancient Sangam age the places in and around Mayiladuthurai region has its existence. The celebrated poet birth place of Kambar, Kambarmedu, is located at Therazhundur, which was also excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India 1982-83 C.E.

In order to trace the unbroken continuity of Mayiladuthurai region, it is necessary to consider the Devotional Literature. Mayuranathar temple is one of the 276 Holy shrines where Devara hymns sung in praise of the Primal deity and the temple. It is one of the six temples on the banks of River Kaveri which is considered to be the equivalent of Kasi. This Siva Sthalam is glorified by the four pillars of Saivism namely, Tirugnanasambandar, Thirugnavukkarasar, Sundarar and Manikkavasakar. The presiding deity is enshrined as a swayambhu Lingam or a self-manifested Linga form, the symbol of Lord Siva. This Linga is dressed with Red cloth only. It also indicates the oneness of male and female. The Goddess is known by various names such as Abhayapradhambikai, Abhayambikai, Anjalanayaki and Anjalai. It is one of the unique sculptures in this temple which represent Lord Siva embracing Goddess Parvathi. There

is a belief that bathe in this temple holy tank on the day of the new moon in the Tamil month of Aippasi (November–December) purifies a person from sins which have committed earlier and the temple tank holy water is equalent to the river Ganges.

Further certain interesting features of the Temple Inscriptions of Mayuranathaswamy Temple, Mayiladuthurai reveals the architectural development of the temple under the Cholas. Around 16 inscriptions of the ancient rulers have been found by Archaeological Survey of India in C.E. 1907 and 1911. The earliest inscription of the temple by its characters of about issued in the 11th Century C.E. reveals that the Mayuranathaswamy temple might have been changed into stone structure during the reign of Kulottunga I Chola. In addition to this the Mayuranathar temple might have been renovated and enlarged during the time of Kulottunga III Chola, last decade of the 12th Century. In addition to that the architectural motifs reveal the fact that the temple was built by the Medieval Cholas. The earliest inscription of the Amman temple issued during the time of Rajaraja III Chola inferred that separate Amman shrine Abhayambal shrine came into existence during the period of Rajaraja III Chola (13th century). The bronze image of Bhokasakthi which was carved during the reign of Rajaraja III Chola is an unique bronze of this temple.

The stone sculptural image of Durga near the northern entrance of the temple is an unique sculpture and differs from those in other temples. This is also said to be a rare form of Durga. Besides, Lord Muruka who would receive His *Vel* weapon from Mother Ambika appears in the temple as Villediya Velan / Dhanush Subramaniya praised by Saint Arunagiriar in his hymns of Tirupugazh. Lord Mahavishnu worshipping Lord Siva is in a separate shrine. Mothers Ashta Lakshmis and Sattainathar are found in the prakara. The Saptamathas are said to have worshipped Shiva in this temple.

At the Mayuranathar temple in Mayiladuthurai, six Sandhi pujas are performed daily. They are *Ushakkalm*, *kala Sandhi*, *Uccikkalam*, *Sayaratchi*, *Erاندamkalam* and *Ardhajamam* elevated the grace and dignity of the rulers and donors as well as the spiritual nature of the Gods and Goddesses.

This place functioned as an important city of the Velir chieftains during the Sangam period. The Velir princesses of Azhundur, which is recently known as Therazhundhur, married the Chola King Uruvapharer Ilanjecenni of the Sangam Age. This Uraiur which is a neighbourhood place of Thiruchirapalli was once the capital of the Sangam Cholas, who were one of the three major Kingdoms of the ancient Tamil country. From this it is clear that the place like Azhundur in Mayavaram region was once the residents and settlements of Princesses like Velir.

In order to trace the antiquity of Mayiladuthurai region it is necessary to consider the Sangam Classical Literature like Porunaratrappadai. Porunaraatrappadai give a detailed descriptions, Karikala Chola fought a great battle at Venni now Kovilvenni near Needamangalam in which, both Pandya and Chera suffered crushing defeat. Besides the two crowned Kings of the Pandya and Chera countries, eleven minor Chieftains took their side in the campaign and shared defeat at the hands of Karikala. The Chera King, who was wounded on his back in the battle, committed suicide by starvation. Venni was the watershed in the career of Karikala, which established him firmly on his throne and secured for him some sort of hegemony among the three crowned monarchs. Venni, which is also known as Vennipparandalai and now it is known as Kovilvenni. Kovilvenni is situated at a distance of 3 km from Needamangalam.

Further Karikala Chola, the most popular Chola ruler the son, and successor of Ilanjecenni defeated his enemies, the Cheras, the Pandyas and their feudatories. Even now, the people of Azhundur conducted a grant festival in lien of this great victory of

the King Karikala in their city. The city also may served as the secondary capital of the Cholas of Sangam Age. The other places of this region are Muvalur and Sittarkadu. These two cities were associated with the great poet Kamban and his son. Three inscriptions are found in Muvalur and Sittakkadu explains these two cities were ruled over by a Chieftain namely Sadaiyan of Pudukkottai is the evidence to determine the Mayiladuthurai region under the Sangam period.

During this period, the Sangam Chola power was at the helm of affairs in the entire region. Then the Mayiladuthurai region eclipsed by the Pallava powers was on a low profile. We do not get ample evidence to know the real position of Mayiladuthurai region during the period of Pallavas. After the passage of time, this region transferred to the Later Cholas. It was soon brought completely under the hegemony of later Chola Kings of the imperial Chola line. During the imperial Chola Period, this Mayiladuthurai was located in Kulottungasolanallur alias Kulottungasola Kurralam in Tiruvalundur Nadu, a division of Jayangondasola Vala Nadu.

Sivabrahmanas, Nambi Bhattar, and Kramavittan. Rajendrachola I inscription refers to the presence of the Sivabrahmanas who were mostly attached to the Siva temples in this region. Some inscription records of Rajarajachola I, Kulottungachola I and Rajendrachola II say that the names of Sivabrahmanas in this region. The Chola Kings, on account of their power, wealth and charity occupied the supreme position in the state as well as in the society. Though most of the Chola rulers were Saivites, they were tolerant towards other religions and extended their patronage to all religions. Kshatriyas patronage of scholars and religious institutions are well attested by a large number of epigraphs.

The main profession of the Vellalas was agriculturists. These communities probably for generation involved themselves in agriculture and subsequently were accepted by the society as Vellalas. A few of them were employed as generals and

officials of the king. The high officials, belonging to their community, were given the honorary title "Muvendavelan". They were adorned by the Vellala officials in the land revenue office during the Chola period. Virasekhara Muvendavelan, Neriudaiyachchola Muvendavelan, Vanavan Muvendavelan, Valavaraja Muvendavelan, Rajendrasimha Muvendavelan, Rajaraja- Tanjainattu Muvendavelan, Rajanarayana Muvendavelan, and Rajakesari Muvendavelan, were the important officials of Vellalas in this region. The Kaikkolas was the name of a prominent weaving community. Adityapanma-terinda-Kaikkolar, Karikalasolant-terinja-Kaikkolar, Gandaradichcha-terinja-Kaikkolar, Rajarajan-terinja-Kaikkolar, Parthivasegarant-terinja-kaikkolar, and Agambadi-kaikkolas they were found on the temple inscriptions of this region. During the Chola i.e. roughly from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries, it was the Saliyar who formed the major weaving community. In fact, they were called the Choliya-Saliyar. The people of Saliya Nagarattar lived in this town. They were mostly engaged in weaving. Weavers lived in separate quarters near the temples and supplied new clothes to the deities of the temples. They participated in the temple administration and enjoyed certain special privileges. For instance, they were given priority at the time of distribution of the sacred offerings in the temples on festival days. The trader's community of the period under study is mentioned in Chola inscriptions as donors of the various types of gifts to the temple. The town was referred to as Anandamangalam alias Kulotungacholapuram. It was a trading center.

They received payment, either cash or kind, from the revenue of the temple. The lands were given as remuneration for their service. These lands were called Uvachakani and Maruttuvakkani. Shepherds are mentioned in the inscriptions by different titles such as Manradi, Itaiyar, Konnar, and Agambadiyar. The Shepherds maintained sheep and cows endowed to the temple. They were the people to supply milk, ghee, and curd to the temple for daily pujas. They lived in separate quarters called Ayarppadi, Ayankudi or Duvarapatti. In the imperial Chola period, the Right Hand and the Left-

Hand castes quarreled among themselves. On one occasion, a dispute between the two groups was peacefully settled by the government officials.

The Valangai Velaikkara soldiers of the right-hand division were the best organized military regiment of the coromandel peasantry during the Chola period. Another name which figured prominently in the society of the Chola period was Velaikkara. The left hand Idangai division of lower social groups in the macro region during Chola period was certainly associated with the mercantile and craft occupations, as the right-hand division was with the agrarian activities. In the latter half of the 11th century, we come across a sort of poll tax called valangai-idaigai magamai collected from them. With regard to the status of women in the period of our society, stray inscriptional references make mentions of women activities in the politics as well as in the social activities. The charities and gifts made by them to temples attest to this fact. During the Pallava period, women were highly respected in the society. They had a keen interest in religion and temple affairs.

They enjoyed right to own property, the queen enjoyed special concessions and privileges. In the early Pandya period, the condition of women appeared to be of equal value with that of men. They occupied a prominent place in this society. The position of women in the Chola society was of special significance.

The caste system was very rigid, and therefore, marriages were generally within the same caste. Occasionally in her caste marriages took place. It is interesting to note that dowry was given to the bride also by the bridegroom. Dowry received by the men from the women side was called Sridhanam which the husband could not spend as he wished. Women also had the right to spend their money for various Philanthropic activities. Unfortunately, no women were vested with administrative powers during the period. The condition of widows was pitiful. They should not adorn themselves with flowers, colorful dresses, and jewels. They were neglected even by their close relatives.

But Sembiyan Madevi was a dedication woman to constructed many temples in this region. She was donated several things to the festivals day of the temples. Even though Rajarajachola I and Rajendrachola I have followed these systems. So, they have constructed the temples for Siva.

The slaves performed many fundamental duties. They did their services with great pleasure and devotion. There are also records registering the sale of persons as Adimai or Slaves. Most of the sales recorded in inscriptions are in favor of temples or mathas. The popular amusements of this period, dance, music, and drama continued to be the three major entertainments.

Musical instruments like such as trumpet, bell, *Segandigai*, *pot-drum (kudamila)*, *talaipparai*, *mattalam*, *karadikai*, *conch*, *kalam*, *Segandigai*, *talam*, and *kalmani* were used in the temple at Mayiladuthurai region by the musicians. Sakkaikuttu and Aryakkuttu dances were performed in the temple of this region. Nataka salai had established by the King for entertaining the people. The dance master and musician were called nattuva-nilai. The theatre was also functioned in this region. It was called Nanavida-natasalai.

A large number of Hindu mathas came into being and they were engaged in the propagation of religious services. Many of the prominent temples of the present day were renovated and enlarged during the Chola period. During the period under review, the temples also served as educational institutions and maintained libraries with their precincts. Schools called Salais were mainly Vedic, Puranic, Sanskrit and Tamil studies. Medicinal education was one of the curricular diseases like premanegam (venereal disease) is also found mentioned in an inscription. The grants were given to the surgeons. It was called by the name Salliyakriya. It appears that the borders performed and conducted minor Surgery. Such periodical festivals afforded an opportunity for men and women in the vicinity of the temple villages.

Temple inscriptions reflect the Economic conditions of the medieval period. The classification of land into different categories, reclamation of land for agricultural purposes, a survey of land, land measurements (Maligaikol and Ulagalandan kol used in this region), different types of land tenures, taxation, etc. are discussed. Elaborate arrangements irrigation facilities. Tanks, channels, and sluices were built by them. They were built like that Arulakara-Vaykkal, Neriudaiyachcholap-Peraru, Kunjaramallan-Vakkal, Unnataraman-Vaykkal.

The period of the Cholas is known for its textile industry like cotton and silk were the two materials used extensively for the manufacture of textiles. Pottery, ceramics, and metal industry were also important vocations of the people of the Cholas days. The coinage of the Cholas was based essentially on gold and copper. The indigenous coins were known as antradunarkasu, drama, Ilakkasu, Ilakkarunkasu, kasu, kasu-pon, kudinaikkal, madai, narkasu, panam, pon, sakkara- kuligai, Urkkarch-chemmaipon, varahan. Renovations were carried out in the early decade of 20th Century during 1907-1927 by Devakottai AL.VR.P.Veerappa Chettiar & Pethaperumal Chettiar.

Suggestions

1. The Temples and Inscriptions of Mayiladuthurai region were not protected by the officials and temple Administrators.
2. These Temple Inscriptions should be protected by the temple officials and administrators in proper ways.
3. Some temple Inscriptions were destroyed after the renovation works.
4. Protecting awareness should be given to all the devotees in the worshipping or festival times.

5. State government of Tamilnadu has to give full support to the protection of temples and inscriptions.
6. So, we should protect to all the type of inscriptions in this region.
7. HR&CE (Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments) Department strictly has inform to the significance of the Temples and Inscriptions to all the devotees through the Notice Board.